



OFFICE OF
INSPECTOR GENERAL

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20220

November 13, 2006

The Honorable John P. Higgins, Jr.
Chairman, PCIE Audit Committee
Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20024

Dear Chairman Higgins:

I am pleased to inform the PCIE Audit Committee that the IGATI Curriculum Review Board (ICRB) has completed a review of the IGATI course titled *The Peer Review Process*. We found that the course provides valuable training and should be continued. The IGATI Director agreed with our recommended improvements related to the class exercises.

Enclosed is a copy of our final report prepared by the Assistant Inspector General for Audit Planning & Administration, Department of Energy.

If you have any questions, please call me on (202) 927-6516.

Sincerely,

/s/

Marla A. Freedman
Chair, ICRB

Enclosure

cc: Helen Lew, Chair
Federal Audit Executive Committee

Danny L. Athanasaw, Director
Inspector General Auditor Training Institute



Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

November 9, 2006

Mr. Danny L. Athanasaw
Director
Inspectors General Auditor Training Institute
1735 N. Lynn Street
10th Floor
Arlington, VA 22209

Dear Mr. Athanasaw:

This memorandum transmits the Inspectors General Auditor Training Institute (IGATI) Curriculum Review Board's (ICBR) final report on the ICBR Curriculum Review of IGATI Course: The Peer review Process, May 31 - June 1, 2006.

The report contains two recommendations. IGATI agrees with both recommendations and the response is included in its entirety on page 5 of this report.

I appreciate the cooperation and courtesy extended to my staff during this audit.

John C. Lucas
for

Linda J. Snider
Assistant Inspector General
for Audit Planning & Administration
Office of Inspector General

Attachment

Report of IGATI Curriculum Review Board
Review of IGATI Course:
The Peer Review Process
May 31- June 1, 2006

Course Title:

The Peer Review Process

ICRB Review Completed:

October 2, 2006, by the U. S. Department of Energy and Department of the Treasury
Offices of Inspector General.

Background:

The review objective was to determine if the IGATI course “The Peer Review Process” met its objective to provide participants with an understanding of how to prepare to conduct an external peer review and to become familiar with guidance for conducting those reviews.

The Peer Review Process course is designed for auditors at a GS-13 level or above. This course can be particularly useful for auditors who have been selected as a member for a peer review team. Prerequisite: Participants need to bring a copy of a performance audit report from their OIG for use in a class exercise.

According to IGATI’s course overview, the course should enable the participants to properly prepare for and conduct an external peer review. The course is based on the PCIE “Guide for Conducting External Quality Control Reviews of the Audit Operations of Offices of Inspector General.”

Upon completion of this course, the participant will be able to understand:

- Legal/standards basis for peer reviews,
- Planning and organizing the peer review, and
- Scope of and approach to peer reviews.

Each participant earns 16 CPE credits by attending the 2 days of classroom training. The tuition per class is \$510.

ICRB Assessment:

Our approach to reviewing The Peer Review Process course was to review the course material, observe the classroom presentation, review the student evaluations, and contact a sample of students after they returned to a working environment.

Based on our review, we determined that the course materials, the presentation, and the exercises adequately addressed the course objectives. We noted that both the course material and presentation have been updated to include all the current references.

On March 31, 2006, IGATI provided the course training material and made the necessary arrangements so that we could observe the course presentation on May 31 – June 1, 2006. Following the observation of the course, IGATI provided the student evaluations for six classes presented during the period November 2003 through June 2006.

From our review of the training material and the observation of the class room presentation, we make two observations:

1. Although the reference material for this course has been updated to include current reference material, a revision of the exercises would be beneficial. For example, there was a lot of time spent during the first day on the crossword and quizzes intended to expose the students to the reference material and statutory requirements. However, the amount of time allotted only permitted a cursory scan that was more frustrating than beneficial to the participants. This was evident from our review of the narrative comments on the evaluations. This observation was the most common comment made by the students on the class evaluations.
2. An area where the course could benefit from the time saved on the crosswords and quizzes would be to include an exercise that reviewed a completed peer review checklist. In addition to this being another common suggestion on student evaluations, the benefit of reviewing a properly completed checklist is that it could be used to stimulate discussion on what is intended by government audit standards, what reasonably demonstrates compliance and the need to reasonably document the basis for the reviewer's answers to the question on the peer review checklists. For example: it would be beneficial for future quality assurance and peer review team members to hear and discuss what others interpret to be adequate documentation that the audit team was qualified, that independence was not impaired and that the supervisory reviews were performed in a timely manner. .

An analysis of the student evaluations was performed for the last six classes to determine their reaction after taking the course. For each of the classes we:

- a) Identified the highest and lowest rated module for each class;
- b) Calculated the average rating for each class;
- c) Calculated the average rating for each module; and,
- d) Read the narratives on the evaluations to identified significant trends.

The following table presents our analyses of student evaluations for the 6 courses held during fiscal year 2004 and fiscal year 2006:

Class Date	11/03	5/04	7/04	2/05	7/05	6/06
Class Type	Regular	Regular	Regular	Regular	Regular	Regular
No.of Evaluations	13	16	7	13	21	22
Key Questions	Scores (5 is the highest; 1 is the lowest)					
Achieved Objectives	4.31	4.69	4.86	4.92	4.05	4.23
Content Organized	4.46	4.88	4.71	4.92	3.90	4.05
Course Material Relevant and Useful	4.77	4.94	5.00	4.85	4.19	4.23
Course will improve current or future job performance	4.46	4.69	4.71	4.85	4.00	4.36
Course was valuable experience	4.62	4.75	4.86	4.92	3.86	4.18

Our review of the narrative comments on the evaluations confirmed the positive ratings indicated by the numerical scores provided. The only recurring narrative comments on the evaluations were the concerns over the value of the crossword quizzes and the desire for reviewing documents from an actual peer review. The overall evaluations for all six classes were very positive. We did notice a decline in the evaluations from the first classes to the last, but attributed that to the fact that the last two classes were significantly larger which reduced the individual interaction and involvement in the exercises.

Finally, to understand the usefulness of the course we interviewed four former students who took the class and then contacted the supervisors of two of these students. To conduct our interviews, we used Appendix B and C of ICRB's Course Content Review Methodology and selected the students from the class roster provided by IGATI. The four students interviewed stated that they liked the course because of the applicability to their current responsibilities. All four stated that they expected the course to provide them with guidance on how to go about performing a peer review and the source of current reference materials. All reported that these expectation were met.

The strongest points were the current reference material received during the class and the instructor's knowledge and experience with the Peer Review process. The weak points were that the crossword exercise was not all that useful and that the class did not include the review of an actual peer review. Both supervisors interviewed stated that the staff members acquired skills and knowledge about the peer review process from the training.

In our opinion the Peer Review course is valuable training that should continue to be offered. Based on responses from the attendees, the course has consistently been able to meet and satisfy the needs of the OIG community. The following recommendations covers some areas where we feel that improvements can be made.

ICRB Recommendations:

We recommend that IGATI:

1. Reduce the number of exercises dealing with the requirement to perform peer reviews and use that time to discuss how to plan and perform an actual review.
2. Add an exercise that reviews a completed peer review checklist and include a discussion on issues such as how the reviewer must use judgment to determine if a standard has been satisfied and the need to document that determination.

IGATI Comments:

IGATI agreed with our recommendations. IGATI's response is included in its entirety on page 5 of this report.


The Inspectors General Auditor Training Institute

1735 N. Lynn Street • 10th Floor • Arlington, VA 22209

Phone (703) 248-4592 • Fax (703) 248-4587

October 19, 2006

Memorandum For: Linda Snider
Director, Planning and Administration
Office of Audit Services
Office of Inspector General
Department of Energy

From: Danny L. Athanasaw 
Director
Inspectors General Auditor Training Institute (IGATI)

Subject: Inspectors General Auditor Training Institute
Response to Draft Report of ICRB Review of IGATI course:
Peer Review Process

Thank you for the opportunity to review and respond to the draft report of IGATI's course titled *Peer Review Process*. IGATI's response to each of recommendations follows:

Recommendation 1: IGATI agrees with the recommendation.

IGATI will review the number and type of exercises given during the course and modify the number of activities given to students. IGATI will also bring into the course discussion on how to plan and perform an actual review.

Recommendation 2: IGATI agrees with the recommendation

IGATI agrees to add an exercise that will re-enforce the understanding of the peer review checklist. IGATI also will include discussion on issues such as how the reviewer uses judgment to determine if a standard has been satisfied and the need to document that determination.

Again thank you and your team members for the opportunity to comment on this report. I appreciate your time and energy involved in this review. I also believe this curriculum review project is necessary to improve IGATI's courses for the betterment of the OIG community.

If you have any questions or further concerns, please contact me at (703) 248-4589.